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Types of Beauty

By

CARLE J. BLENNER

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THE

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CARLE J. BLENNER

Introduction

FOREMOST among the names of American artists stands that of Mr. Carle J. Blenner, whose portraits and types of beautiful women have made him famous. So well known are the "Blenner heads" that the greatest compliment that can be paid to a woman is to say she is lovely enough to be painted by Blenner.

Mr. Blenner was born in Richmond, Virginia, his mother being a Southerner of French descent, and his father a German. He was educated at schools abroad and at Yale University, but he was obliged to leave college, after spending three years there, owing to ill health. During one of his vacations when he was in Europe studying music, some one suggested to him that his real talent was drawing and painting; so, making an exception to the general rule, he followed the advice. His first big success came in 1889, when he exhibited a painting at the Paris Salon. It was called "Contentment," and represents an old woman sitting by a window, on the ledge of which is a pot of scarlet geraniums; the repose of the figure and the restful expression of the face carry out the title which the artist was so happy in selecting.

Mr. Blenner studied at the Yale Art School, and also in Paris under the best masters, including Bouguereau and Fleury, at Julian's atelier. A marked feature of the young artist's work is his exquisite coloring, especially his flesh tints; another feature which is almost as sure to be seen as his signature is the "inevitable flower." Being an admirer of beauty in every form, Mr. Blenner appreciates the dainty touch which is given by a flower

in the hair, or in the draperies around the shoulders of his models. As he excels in painting the curves of the throat and neck, his best effect is obtained with some soft gauze or chiffon arranged to bring out the graceful poise of the head.

While most of his models are blondes, Mr. Blenner occasionally paints a brunette, whose dark hair and brilliant coloring make a striking contrast to the golden or Titian red hair and fair skin of his other subjects. Another characteristic of his work is that he never begins to paint until he has made a careful study of the best expression of the face, and in this way he brings out the character, as well as the beauty of feature and coloring. He has never yet painted a pretty but expressionless "baby face."

Among the persons whose portraits have been painted by Mr. Blenner are His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, Lady Hamilton, and Madame Nordica.

His work is thoroughly original, although it shows careful study and training. It is doubtless due to this that his paintings possess a certain finish and style that are not to be found among the artists of the "Impressionist School." Mr. Blenner paints his lights and shadows as they are, and not as they appear through "blue glasses."

He has exhibited for several years at the Paris Salons and has received honorable mention. In 1891 he exhibited in Boston, where a medal was awarded to him, and several years ago he won the Hallgarten prize at the Academy of Design. His work was also shown at the World's Fair and the Pan-American Exhibition, where he received honorable mention. Mr. Blenner's private exhibitions in New York and London are largely attended, and, although he is one of the younger artists, his skill has created much attraction for the older men of his profession.

Though noted for his types of feminine beauty, he has also been very successful with his portraits of men; whereas it was due to his landscapes and marine sketches that his talent as an artist was first recognized.

Mr. Blenner's studio is in New York, and it is there, surrounded by rare bric-a-brac and antique furniture, that he mixes his colors and paints the portraits which he has made famous as the "Blenner types."

The work of an illustrator is constantly brought before the public, but as yet few *painters* have had their pictures reproduced for publication in book form, owing, doubtless, to the fact that their paintings seldom possess that minuteness of detail and softness of finish that are necessary for the purpose. Mr. Blenner's work has been found an exception; and while his wonderful flesh tints can not be given, nor an idea of his "light reflections" be conveyed, yet his art is so beautiful when reproduced in the soft shades of an engraving that the present volume has been issued in order to supply a demand created by the widespread popularity of the artist's talents.

C. Boardman Rogers.

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DAY DREAMS
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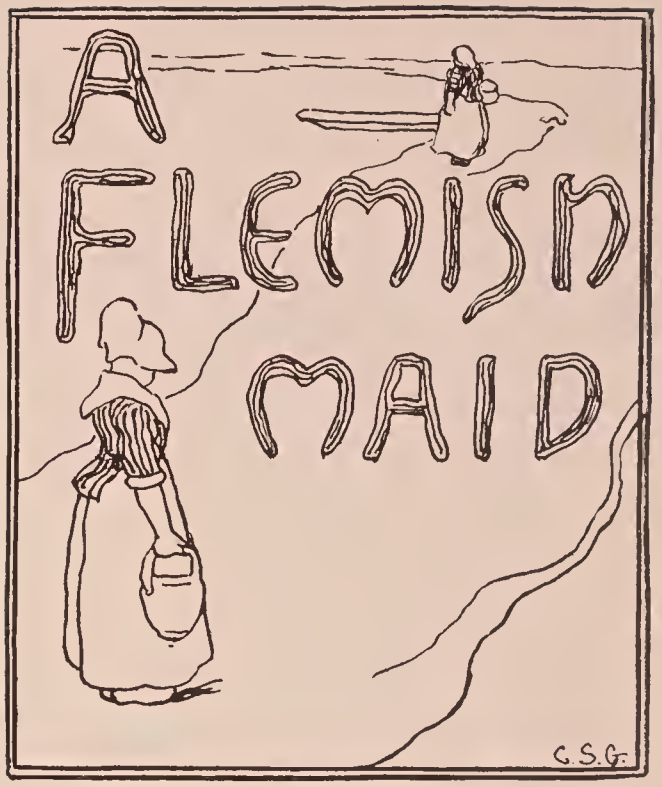
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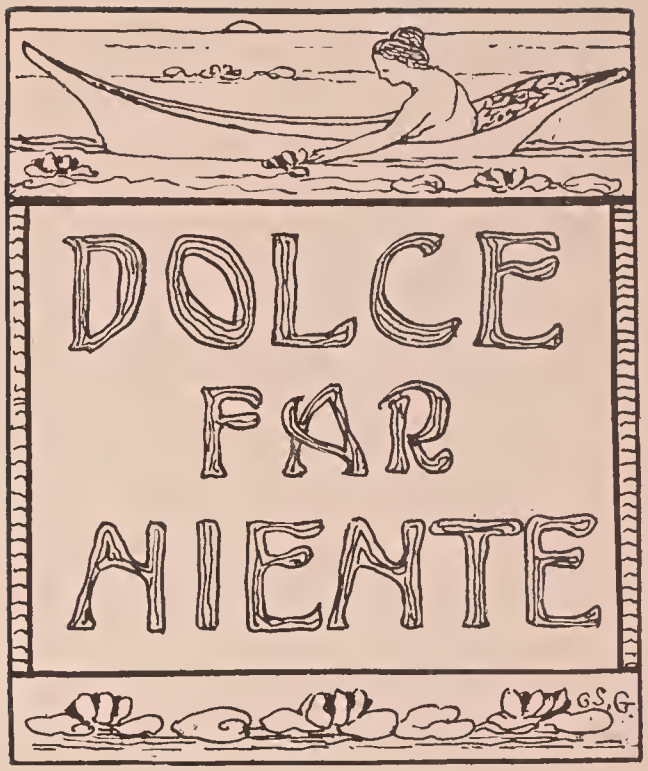
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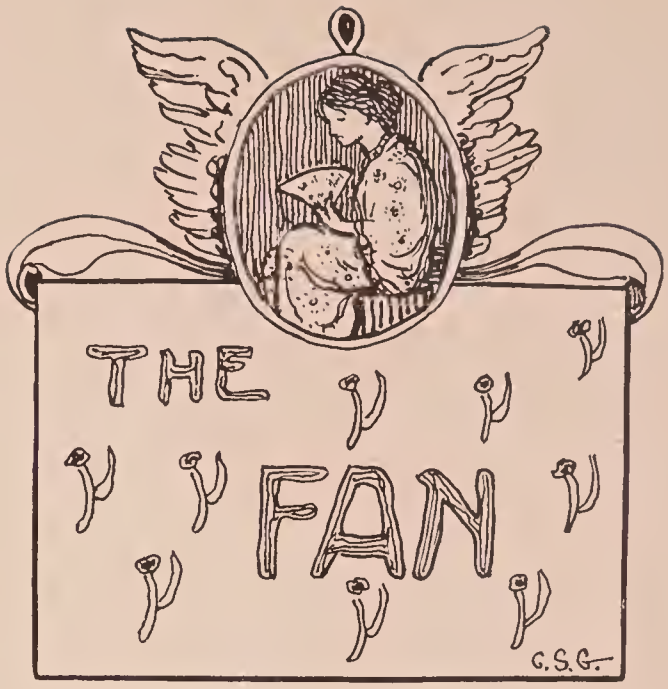
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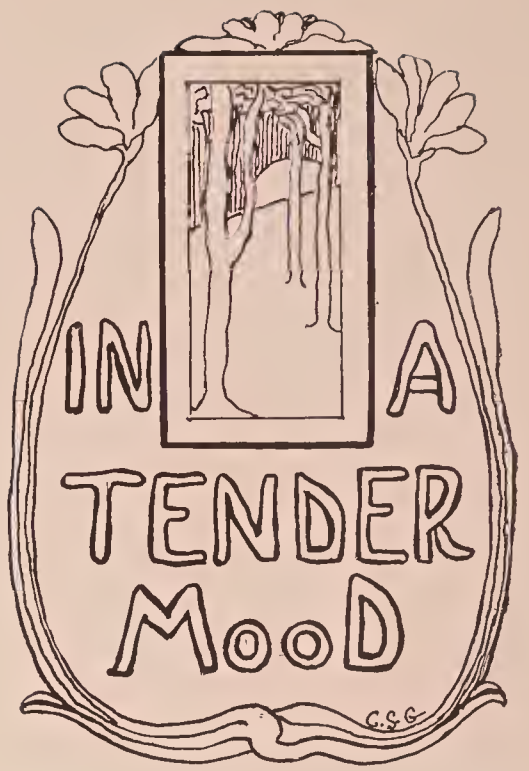
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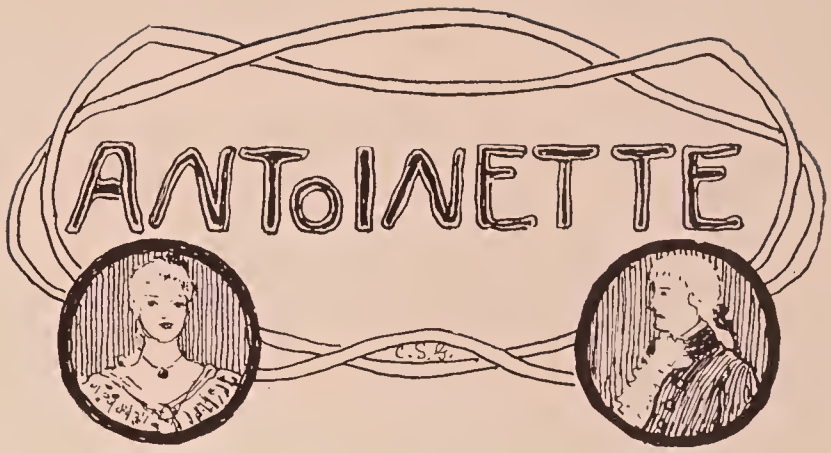
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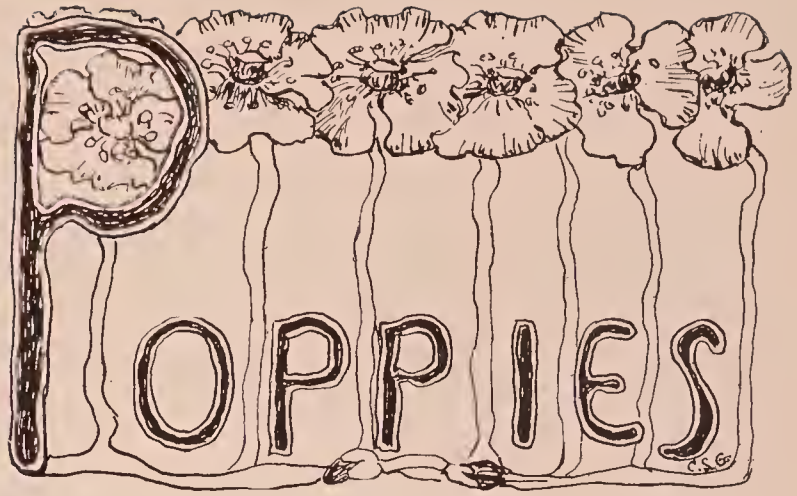
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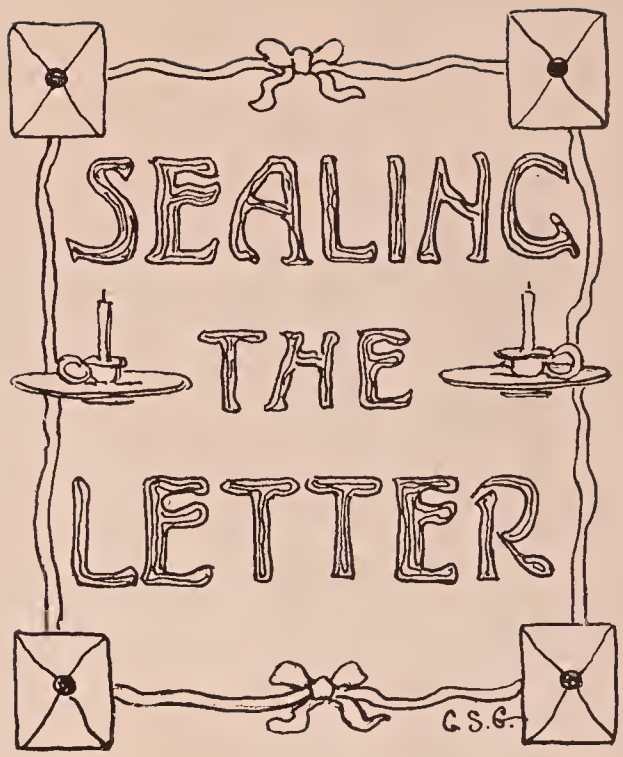
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